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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The outgoing President, H. E. Mr. Zbigniew Maria Wlosowicz (Poland), opened the first regular session 1996. He thanked the members of the outgoing Bureau, delegations and the Executive Board secretariat staff for having made possible the successes and achievements of the Board in 1995. The Board had adopted important and innovative legislation in 1995, in particular in relation to the successor programming arrangements, UNFPA programme priorities and future directions in light of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the budgets of UNDP and UNFPA. The legislation had firmly set the path for the renewed vitality and efficiency of the two organizations in the efforts to ensure sustainable human development and poverty eradication.

2. The outgoing President informed the Executive Board that since the third regular session 1995, the Bureau had met five times: on 6 and 26 October 1995, 14 November 1995, and 8 and 15 January 1996. The Bureau had agreed on the countries and dates for field visits in 1996, with the first one to the People's Republic of China (3-17 February) and the second to Mozambique and Malawi (9-22 June). The composition of the team visiting the People's Republic of China had been agreed upon.

3. The Bureau had reviewed the working methods of the Executive Board and had held extensive discussion on the consideration of UNDP country cooperation frameworks and UNFPA country programmes, the bulk of which would be taken up in 1997. That particular issue, referred to in document DP/1996/3 on the implementation of successor programming arrangements, was raised at the pre-session briefing for the first regular session 1996 held on 14 December 1995. He suggested that the Executive Board might wish to review the issue in conjunction with the consideration of item 3: "UNDP: Matters relating to the programming cycles".

4. The Executive Board elected, by acclamation, the following Bureau for 1996:

President	H. E. Ms. Annette DES ILES (Trinidad and Tobago)
Vice-President	Mr. Bruce L. NAMAKANDO (Zambia)
Vice-President	Ms. Cecilia B. REBONG (Philippines)
Vice-President	Mr. Milan DUBCEK (Slovakia)
Vice-President	Mr. Rolando BAHAMONDES (Canada)

5. The newly elected President of the Executive Board for 1996, Ambassador des Iles, recognized that the first day of the session coincided with the birthday commemoration of American civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, born in 1929. She stated that the vision and ideals of Dr. King epitomized the goals of the work of the Board. Moreover, in connection with the designation of 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, she recalled that Dr. King had, in his final years, linked the attainment of peace and racial harmony with poverty eradication. She emphasized the need to dream and work with purpose and optimism. She

hoped for a fruitful year ahead for the Executive Board, with a prevailing spirit of consensus.

6 The Executive Board approved the following agenda for its first regular session, as contained in document DP/1995/L.1 and as amended:

Item 1. Organizational matters

UNDP segment

Item 2. UNDP: Initiatives for change

Item 3. UNDP: Matters relating to the programming cycles

Item 4. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters

Item 5. UNDP: Report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

Item 6. United Nations technical cooperation activities

Item 7. United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNDP/UNFPA segment

Item 8. UNDP/UNFPA: Follow-up to and preparations for the Economic and Social Council

Item 9. UNDP/UNFPA: Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNFPA segment

Item 10. UNFPA: Strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources

Item 11. UNFPA: Future role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs

Item 12. UNFPA: Global contraceptive commodity programme

Item 13. UNFPA: Membership in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy

Item 14. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 15. UNFPA: South-South cooperation

Item 16. Other matters

7 The Executive Board decided to postpone the item on agency support costs (originally listed as agenda item 8 in document DP/1996/L.1) to the second regular session 1996.

8. The Executive Board agreed to the work plan contained in document DP/1996/L.1, as amended and distributed.

9 The Executive Board approved the report of the third regular session 1995 (DP/1995/54).

10 One delegation enquired whether UNFPA country representatives would be present during the session. The Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA said that none would be present at the session, as the items to be considered by the Executive Board under agenda item 15 were requests for additional resources for ongoing UNFPA country programmes and not requests for approval for a new cycle of assistance in those countries. He noted that UNFPA country representatives would, as in the past, participate in Board sessions at which the Board considered UNFPA country programme submissions.

Executive Board documentation

11. The Permanent Representative of Benin, on behalf of the Executive Board members belonging to the Francophone Group, raised the issue of dissemination and distribution of Board documentation in the working and official languages of the United Nations. The issue had been raised at the informal pre-session briefing on 14 December 1995. The matter was of the utmost importance to the francophone members of the Board as well as to other delegations. Respect for universality in the United Nations and multilingualism was for the francophone countries integral to the optimal and efficient functioning of UNDP and UNFPA.

12. The distribution in English only of "yellow" (advance) copies of documents posed a problem for francophone delegations: they could not hold proper consultation in the capitals nor could they adquately reflect the views of their Governments at pre-session briefings.

13. He underlined that in its resolution 50/11 of 1995, the General Assembly had asked for simultaneous distribution of all language versions of documentation. Moreover, the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council established, in article 13, that, unless the Council decided otherwise, if the documentation relative to an item to be considered had not been communicated in all official languages six weeks prior to the opening of the session, the item could be postponed to the following session. The rules of procedure for the Governing Council of UNDP/UNFPA (the predecessor of the Executive Board) had included the same rule.

14. He thanked the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board secretariat for trying to remedy the situation of late issuance of documents in languages. He recalled that in its decision 94/24 on documentation, which was provisional, the Board had stipulated that while awaiting establishment of rules of procedure for the Executive Board, reports not submitted to Conference Services seven weeks prior to the session (nine weeks for country programmes) be deferred unless an exception was made. While underlining

that his group did wish to be flexible, he emphasized the necessity of having a specific, rigorous examination of the dissemination and distribution of documentation at that stage.

15. The numerous questions relating to the issue could not be fully understood without a precise knowledge of all of its elements. With four sessions per year and the obligation of distributing the documentation six weeks before the beginning of sessions, a rule that was clearly imposed by the sense of General Assembly resolution 50/11, his group recognized that the dissemination of documents in all official languages represented a true obstacle that ought to be surmounted through conducting an appropriate exercise that would critically analyse all dimensions and steps in the production of documentation. In its resolution 50/11, the General Assembly had also severely limited the general practice of issuing "preliminary documents". A better organization of work could allow for improved dissemination of the key Executive Board documentation. Other ideas that his group would like to explore were prioritization of documentation, guidelines for the number of pages, and better discipline on the part of the Board itself in requesting documentation. Moreover, the group should determine measures to deal with the late production of documents. The Francophone Group reserved the right to request a status report on documentation prior to each session.

16. Support was expressed for the statement of the Francophone Group. One delegation noted that the problems elaborated by the Francophone Group were inherent to the United Nations system. He emphasized the disadvantage at informal consultations of delegations who could not get comments from their capitals because the documents were not available in official languages.

17. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/06. Documentation

The Executive Board

1. Recalls the importance of strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the different bodies and organs of the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolution 50/11;

2. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to establish a working group on document distribution issues, in collaboration with the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, with the participation of the departments concerned and in association with representatives of the linguistic groups;

3. Requests the Administrator to submit a report to the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 on the status of this issue and to propose concrete solutions.

19 January 1996

Future sessions

18. The Executive Board agreed to the following schedule of future sessions in 1996, which would take place in New York, except for the annual session, which would be held in Geneva:

Second regular session 1996:	25-29 March 1996
Annual session 1996:	6-17 May 1996
Third regular session 1996:	9-13 September 1996

(Note: 16 May is an official United Nations holiday in Geneva)

19. One delegation asked that a careful cost estimate be undertaken on the venue options of Geneva and New York for the annual session and be presented to the Executive Board before it took a decision on the venue of the annual session 1998. Two delegations, on behalf of others, expressed strong support for maintaining the venue of Geneva for the annual session in alternate years.

20. After some discussion, it was agreed to add an item on "consideration of rules of procedure" to the agenda of the annual session 1996. The venue of future annual sessions would also be taken up under that item.

21. Following requests from a delegation, the item on United Nations Volunteers, scheduled for the second regular session, was deferred to the annual session and a report on the first field visit of 1996 was scheduled for the second regular session 1996.

22. It was also noted that the process of consideration of UNFPA country programmes by the Executive Board would be raised at the second regular session 1996. UNFPA was requested to consult with the relevant parties at UNDP and UNICEF on the issue. It was decided to include an item on a UNFPA mission statement on the agenda for the annual session 1996.

23. The table on allocation of subjects for 1995-1998 was made available to the Executive Board.

24. The Executive Board agreed to the allocation of subjects for its 1996 sessions, included in the annex to overview decision 96/12.

UNDP SEGMENT

II. INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

25. Introducing the item, the Administrator stated that 1996 would be a year of further important challenges for UNDP. The fifieth anniversary of the United Nations had generated many ideas about the future of development cooperation. The reform of development assistance, the reform and strengthening of the United Nations as a major force for development and the enhancement of the role of UNDP in development were key preoccupations in many quarters.

26. He welcomed the ten new Executive Board members: Belize, Canada, Finland, Madagascar, Malaysia, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, and Ukraine. He also introduced the new Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs, Mr. Normand Lauzon, and announced the appointments of Mr. Richard Jolly as Special Adviser to the Administrator with oversight of the Human Development Report, and Ms. Soheyla Chahkar-Farhang as Secretary of the Executive Board.

27. The Administrator went on to review a number of developments arising from the third regular session 1995 of the Executive Board with which UNDP was actively engaged. Citing the new emphasis on poverty eradication in the programme mandate of UNDP, he said UNDP had intensified its plan of analysis and consultation with its partners in order to bring about the sharper focus in its programming. The Bureau for Programme Policy and Support (BPPS) was taking the lead in that initiative. During the current session, BPPS would propose a schedule of informal consultations with the Executive Board to explore various strategies for dealing with the question of greater focus and for addressing poverty eradication from a thematic perspective.

28. The Administrator mentioned recent initiatives taken by UNDP: the transmittal to country offices of the new conceptual framework of UNDP: "From Poverty to Equity: An Empowering and Enabling Strategy", which outlined approaches for addressing the structural causes of poverty; UNDP participation with its United Nations system partners in task forces as part of the integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences, notably the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit on Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women; the successful organization of recent aid coordination meetings on Angola and Namibia; and the establishment of the Trust Fund to Support Governance in Africa.

29. On organizational issues, the Administrator informed the Executive Board that results from the November 1995 Pledging Conference indicated that funds for 1996 would fall only slightly below the 1995 total of about $950 million. He thanked those Governments that had made strong efforts to maintain or, as in a number of cases, to increase their core contributions. He observed that the 1996-1997 biennial budget had set the financial parameters of the programme of UNDP of cost reduction and restructuring, on which UNDP was moving decisively. The staffing implications of downsizing in such difficult times were being managed with as much deliberation and sensitivity as was humanly possible. He also referred to the new human resources and training

strategy of UNDP, which aimed to modernize personnel management principles and practices in the organization and, through the continuous development of new abilities and skills, to keep UNDP staff at the forefront of the United Nations system of the future.

30. Turning to paragraph 4 of Executive Board decision 95/22, the Administrator summarized developments in the planning process of UNDP following the introduction in June 1995 of a prototype corporate plan. The 1995 plan, he noted, was now under vigorous implementation. Moreover, considerable efforts had been made to institutionalize corporate planning in UNDP and to formulate through extensive internal consultation a representative UNDP mission statement.

31. Stressing that a number of elements contained in document DP/1996/2 were necessarily still at a preliminary stage, he proceeded to highlight the principal proposals of UNDP for the 1996-1997 corporate plan. First, UNDP had arrived at a draft mission statement that aimed to capture the programme mandate given by the Executive Board while also distilling the vision and aspirations of UNDP staff. The comments of the Board on the draft would be welcome. Second, UNDP management considered it vital to synchronize the planning and budgetary cycles in the organization. It was proposed to achieve that synchronization by the start of the 1998-1999 biennium and after that to issue the corporate plan every two years. As a transitional step, the next corporate plan would span the 18-month period from June 1996 to December 1997. Since much in the current corporate plan, which had been introduced just seven months previously, remained highly pertinent, it would remain in effect through the first half of 1996. Third, it was intended to use a logical framework in the next plan, emphasizing corporate objectives, unit-level objectives, key results areas, performance indicators, the regular evaluation of results and the use of incentives to promote success and accountability.

32. Next, it was proposed to tighten up the system in UNDP of monitoring performance under the corporate plan through several measures, including the adoption organization-wide of a uniform work-plan format. Last, through a final round of discussion at the senior-management level, it was intended to complete in February 1996 the final ordering of the corporate priorities and operational objectives tentatively discussed in document DP/1996/2.

33. Twenty-five delegations spoke on the item. Most expressed their interest in, and support for, the various initiatives UNDP had taken in following up on matters arising from the previous session. A number requested further information on specific developments, including the proposed series of informal consultations on the anti-poverty focus of UNDP, the role of UNDP in various new inter-agency task forces and its new human resources strategy.

34. Many delegations commented on the draft UNDP mission statement. While some found it concise in relation to the draft statement prepared by UNFPA, others thought it not concise enough when compared to the draft UNICEF mission statement. Many delegations also said the text should encompass not only the staff of UNDP but all stakeholders, including the Executive Board and participating countries.

35. Many delegations noted that the draft required more refinement with respect to its presentation and wording. The final text should be accessible

to the wider public and should be written to appeal to those not familiar with UNDP or its processes and terminology. Other drafting issues raised included the need to: place greater emphasis on capacity-building; refer to Governments explicitly as the major stakeholders of UNDP; use the term "good" rather than "responsible" governance; mention the neutrality and impartiality of UNDP; eliminate elements of the text that were not of a permanent nature, such as the numbers of UNDP country offices or countries served by UNDP; and capture all the major elements of the programme mandate of UNDP, including aid coordination and support for the resident coordinator function in line with General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120. One delegation suggested that the parallel structure of the selected extract from the preamble to the United Nations Charter and the first line of the draft mission statement of UNDP was not appropriate.

36. A number of delegations pointed out that the epithet "corporate" had private sector connotations that were inappropriate when applied to the objectives and priorities of an organization such as UNDP. Others observed that the word "corporate" when translated into their languages (French and Spanish) had a quite acceptable meaning. One delegation remarked that what the text omitted also mattered. It was important, for instance, that the statement should recognize that poverty had external dimensions and that UNDP would not limit its anti-poverty focus to domestic causes alone. Moreover, a reference to the key role of economic growth in reducing poverty was essential.

37. Some delegations proposed that, in order to take the process of finalizing the mission statement further, the secretariat should hold an informal meeting with interested Executive Board members.

38. On corporate planning itself and the proposals contained in DP/1996/2, delegations expressed their appreciation for the efforts of UNDP to institutionalize a systematic planning process for managing change. The consultative process UNDP had followed was commendable and the paper offered a good basis for elaborating the 1996-1997 corporate plan. It was important now to move the emphasis from the model to its application and full implementation. The emphasis in the Administrator's statement on results-based management and measurable performance indicators was particularly welcome.

39. The proposed synchronization of the planning and budgetary cycles in UNDP on a biennial basis received widespread support, as did was the suggested time-frame of the next corporate plan (June 1996-December 1997). Several delegations said they were content with the proposed structure of the forthcoming plan, including the set of corporate operational objectives initially identified. Many attached particular importance to objective 1, which related to operationalizing sustainable human development (SHD) with a concentrated focus on poverty eradication. Others considered objective 3, which dealt with constituency-building and mobilizing resources for SHD to hold the key to the future in view of the financial situation of UNDP. A number emphasized that enhancing the resident coordinator function should be pursued in conjunction with other United Nations agencies, in line with the recent triennial policy review of United Nations operational activities and General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120. A few delegations said that the proposed situational analysis should provide an assessment of the performance of UNDP under the preceding plan and should cite factors

accounting for success or failure. One delegation noted that the preliminary operational objectives in the paper were not hierarchically structured and said that the final plan should rank its operational objectives according to priority.

40. Many delegations underlined that evaluation had not received sufficient attention in document DP/1996/2. Evaluation was central to any assessment of the performance and to its reputation in donor circles. Its role in helping UNDP to become a more efficient and effective organization could not be underestimated. The expansion of evaluation, including the promotion of lessons learned and the design of clear performance measures, should receive prominence as an objective of the 1996-1997 corporate plan, especially in view of Executive Board decision 95/23, in which the Board had decided to increase resources available for the evaluation function in the successor programming arrangements.

41. Responding to the debate, the Administrator thanked delegations for their constructive comments on the draft mission statement and the outline of the next corporate plan. On the general presentation of the draft statement, he said that there were many different types of aims that a mission statement could try to achieve. The purpose of the present draft had been to elicit a statement and a commitment from the staff of UNDP as an exercise in team-building. Concerning some of the language of the statement, he pointed out that, by their nature, the challenges of promoting the new SHD paradigm, supporting the resident coordinator function and helping to synthesize the inputs of sector-based agencies made the mission of UNDP somewhat more complicated than that of its sister organizations. The text of the draft statement could not avoid reflecting some of that complexity. Regarding the use of the word "corporate", the intention was not in any way to reflect the values of a private, profit-oriented entity but simply to describe priorities and objectives that were organization-wide and shared at the highest organizational level.

42. He agreed that Governments were the principal stakeholders of UNDP and should be identified as such. Nor was there any disagreement over the importance of the capacity-building function of UNDP. That was why both those matters appeared in the very first paragraph of the statement. He also agreed that economic growth was an essential engine for eradicating poverty and building equity. He welcomed the desire of the Executive Board to be associated with the final UNDP mission statement, which he took as a compliment to the organization.

43. The issue now was to finalize the draft statement, taking into full account the comments of the Executive Board, without reopening questions that had been resolved in the programme framework, which the Board had already agreed upon. UNDP was acting within that important framework. It had also initiated a major corporate-planning process. Bringing closure to the mission statement should be accomplished in a time-bound manner without holding up implementation of that framework and plan.

44. On the corporate planning process, the Administrator thanked delegations for accepting the proposals of UNDP regarding synchronization with the budget cycle, the time-frame of the next plan and steps to enhance monitoring and the development of clear performance indicators. UNDP would take into account the advice given on particular corporate operational objectives.

45. Concerning evaluation, he said that the lack of emphasis on that function, which many delegations had noticed, was the result of understatement by the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning. OESP had in fact been engaged in a vigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation throughout 1995 and had an expanded work programme in its pipeline for 1996-1997. The Executive Board would have an opportunity to review the extent and scope of OESP evaluation activities at its second regular session 1996, when the Office would present its annual report on evaluation. UNDP did not underestimate the significance of the evaluation function, which would be properly reflected in the final corporate plan for 1996-1997.

46. The Executive Board took note of document DP/1996/2 and its proposals regarding the corporate planning process. It was agreed that an informal session on the draft mission statement would be convened prior to the annual session 1996.

III. MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

47. In introducing document DP/1996/3, the Administrator noted that the implementation of the successor programming arrangements approved under Executive Board decision 95/23 required profound and rapid changes to programming processes that had evolved slowly in UNDP over more than two decades. He emphasized that part A of the implementation guidelines, summarized in DP/1996/3, and other guidelines to be issued, should be considered living documents that would be revised in the light of experience. The Administrator also sought further guidance on the preliminary suggestions made in document DP/1996/3 on streamlining the workload associated with the large volume of country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) expected in future regular sessions.

48. The Administrator also introduced document DP/1996/CRP.2 (available in English, French and Spanish), which provided preliminary target for resource assignments from core (TRAC) earmarkings for individual recipient countries under line 1.1.1. The calculations conformed to the provisions of decision 95/23 and were based on the $3.3 billion target for voluntary contributions for 1997 to 1999 established under that decision. He noted that 1994 basic data for some countries were still considered estimates. Therefore, in accordance with past practice, a reserve had been established to accommodate, inter alia, increases in TRAC earmarkings arising from changes to 1994 basic data reported during 1996. Guidelines for the remaining facilities were being prepared and when finalized would be made available to the Executive Board.

49. While sincerely appreciating the commitment of the Executive Board to the $3.3 billion target, the Administrator indicated that for prudent resource management, TRAC earmarkings communicated to resident representatives for initial programme planning purposes would be based on the current estimate of $1 billion in average annual core income. In that it would take major efforts by all parties to reach the original target, the Administrator proposed that a special ad hoc committee be established to assist UNDP in achieving that goal. He noted various initiatives being undertaken to help publicize the concept of UNDP and sustainable human development in a number of donor countries.

50. Many delegations spoke on the item and, in general, commended UNDP for an overall reflection of the spirit and the letter of Executive Board decision 95/23 in the guidelines. A number of delegations, in particular from Eastern European countries, questioned the preliminary earmarkings for TRAC as shown in the conference room paper.

51. With respect to Executive Board involvement in CCF reviews, one delegation suggested that partners at the country level be consulted on the preliminary programme note (PPN) after its review by UNDP and the Government. The PPN could also be distributed through headquarters, without formal discussion by the Executive Board. Those consultations at an early stage would reduce the need for the Board to hold lengthy discussions on CCFs, which could be approved on a no-objection basis.

52. Several delegations were sympathetic to the suggestion, noting that the guidelines seemed to allow for country-level consultations on the PPN. A system where the Administrator and the Executive Board members highlighted certain CCFs for discussion, and the majority were dealt with on a no-objection basis, was more practicable where PPNs were discussed informally at an early stage.

53. Many speakers, however, did not concur with the idea of consultation on the PPN at an early stage, since the PPN was an internal UNDP document and the Government did not appear to have an active role in its preparation. While informal consultations with the Government and development partners on the PPN would normally take place at the country level, it was inappropriate to institutionalize the process. Questions were raised concerning the distinction between the PPN and the CCF, the role of the Government, the function of the country strategy note (CSN) in the overall process, and the apparent contradictions between some paragraphs of the summary in document DP/1996/3 and the complete guidelines made available during the session. Several delegations noted that the clarifications later provided by the Administrator (see paragraphs 63-68 below) were acceptable and that the guidelines should be amended accordingly.

54. Other suggestions were made to streamline the workload of the Executive Board vis-à-vis the number of CCFs to be approved. Included among them were: a working committee at each regular session to review CCFs, which would recommend some for consideration by the plenary; extended sittings of the Board or an additional regular session each year; inclusion of an executive summary in the CCF; and using 1996 as a trial period in CCF reviews with a determination of future working modalities following that experience.

55. Many speakers agreed that CCFs could be approved on a no-objection basis, with discussion taking place only if requests were made by at least five countries. The Administrator could highlight CCFs on a regional or other representative basis. To reduce the volume of papers coming to the Executive Board, UNDP would need to be flexible in the timing of reviews and restrict the number reviewed per session.

56. There was general agreement that the frameworks presented to the Executive Board for its review should be clear, brief and strategic and should concentrate on overall alignment with programming mandates, thus avoiding any need for the Board to micro-manage the process. Several speakers stressed the need for the Board to take a leading role at the review stage in order to

determine how successful the CCFs had been in achieving desired outcomes. In that connection, some delegations noted that the review mechanisms described in paragraphs 26-29 of document DP/1996/3 should be made more manageable. The system should ensure that the Executive Board had review and evaluation information available in order to consider the outcome and results of the CCF and how that experience could be utilized in future programming. It was recommended that the Board give key consideration to the issue in the future.

57. Several speakers expressed concern over the level of involvement by headquarters and regional bureaux, especially in PPN, CCF and resource assignment reviews. Several speakers requested clarification on the availability of TRAC resources once the CCF had been approved, and questioned the need for the additional review for resource assignment. One delegation was concerned that the process could lead to underprogramming and underdelivery.

58. Clarification was requested on how the rolling financial system could accommodate planning beyond the approved programming period of the CCF, and how the annual release of resources would account for fluctuations in core resources and changes in basic data on gross national product and population.

59. Several speakers affirmed that the criteria for resource assignment were in line with decision 95/23, but underlined the importance of firm application as they were stated very broadly. Key concepts reflected in the criteria must be defined.

60. Several delegations requested clarification on the consistency of the tables contained in the conference room paper, with all provisions of Executive Board decision 95/23, especially regarding the additional resources made available for countries in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Another delegation requested clarification on the use of World Bank data when a country was not a member of the World Bank.

61. Several delegations emphasized that further consultations on the guidelines could be necessary before they were finalized, but without delay to work at the country level. Flow charts on the procedures would make the document much more user-friendly and logical, and translations into working languages were required as soon as possible.

62. One delegation, in recalling the contribution of his Government for resident coordinator functions, encouraged others to provide such support during the transition to the new arrangements.

63. In responding to issues raised in the discussion, the Administrator expressed appreciation for the helpful comments made and recognized that, for some aspects, the complete guidelines offered clearer explanations than the summary provided in document DP/1996/3. He reiterated that the guidelines, which were being translated into working languages, would be subject to revisions based on the comments of the Executive Board at the present session and in informal consultations held prior to the first regular session, and on the basis of country office feedback on early experience with implementation. As suggested, flow charts would be added to clarify the processes described as well as the evaluation and review processes; the rolling financial framework would also be elaborated. He underlined that, even with the improvements under the successor arrangements, UNDP continued to operate a multi-year

programming system under the constraints of a financial system based on annual contributions.

64. Concerning the preliminary programme note and the country cooperation framework, the Administrator acknowledged that the apparent confusion could have been avoided by retaining the former terminology. He confirmed that the PPN was essentially the former advisory note - an internal document that allowed UNDP to reflect its preliminary thinking on programming possibilities. There was a role for both the national Government and UNDP headquarters review committees in the preparation of the PPN which, by definition, took national priorities into account and involved consultations with the Government and other partners. While the PPN facilitated the initiation of formal dialogue with the Government on the substance of the CCF, it did not predetermine the final content of the CCF, which was a national document. The PPN was not a substitute for the CCF, and if necessary, the guidelines could be amended to provide clarification. He noted that where a CSN existed, the PPN could be derived from that Government-owned document. Although the CSN was not mandatory, there was a clear legislative encouragement to support its preparation.

65. On resource assignment, the Administrator confirmed that upon approval of the CCF by the Executive Board, 60 per cent of TRAC resources would be made available immediately and automatically. The request for resources, described in the summary of the guidelines, made it possible for countries to obtain a higher TRAC assignment at that time if they were ready to do so. Subsequent reviews, however, also permitted countries to seek additional TRAC resources at a later stage. Programming lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 resources simultaneously ensured that the assignment criteria were applied uniformly, as specified by the Board in its decision 95/23.

66. The Administrator emphasized that the criteria for assignment adhered to the programming framework established by all members of the Executive Board under the various relevant decisions summarized in annex 1 of document DP/1996/3. He noted that the inclusion of resource mobilization as one of the criteria served to enhance coordination, since UNDP funding could be leveraged to encourage partners to support programming priorities supported by the Executive Board.

67. The Administrator confirmed that the processes set out in the guidelines were expected to lead to greater decentralization. He acknowledged that the PPN, like the former advisory note, was subject to headquarters review. Resource allocation among countries also had to be done centrally and the regional bureaux were in the best position to advise the Administrator on those allocations. Executive Board review of CCFs was also a headquarters-based process. However, once the CCF was approved and TRAC resources were assigned on the basis of programme outlines, then actual implementation could be devolved to a greater degree to the country level.

68. The Administrator reconfirmed that the calculations presented in the conference room paper had been based on all relevant criteria set out in decision 95/23. However, the 0.5 per cent of core resources for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region - specified in paragraph 19 of that decision - came from outside the TRAC allocations, and therefore, was not included in the table in the conference room paper. Those amounts would be

assigned in consultation with the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. He also confirmed that the procedure undertaken by the UNICEF Executive Board to approve country programmes would be monitored by UNDP.

69. The item was discussed in informal sessions, at which the proposal of the Administrator in document DP/1996/CRP.2 relating to resource mobilization challenges was also considered. The Executive Board took note of the intent of the Administrator to make every effort to achieve the $3.3 billion figure set for planning purposes for 1997-1999, as established in its decision 95/23.

70. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/07. Implementation of the successor programming arrangements

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report contained in document DP/1996/3, of comments made by delegations thereon, and of the clarifications provided by the Administrator during the discussions of the report and requests the Administrator to ensure that the guidelines be in full conformity with those clarifications, which will also be contained in the report of the first regular session 1996, and that the revised guidelines be submitted to the Executive Board as soon as possible, and no later than at the annual session 1996;

2. Reaffirms that the country cooperation framework is the central document in the country programming process and that the recipient Government has the primary responsibility for the formulation of the framework, in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme, as well as for the coordination of all types of external assistance, in order to integrate the assistance effectively into its development process;

3. Stresses the importance it attaches to the mechanisms for coordination at the country level established in General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 and reaffirms that the country cooperation framework should be formulated in accordance with those resolutions;

4. Notes that the country cooperation framework should be based on a realistic estimate of income from both core and non-core resources;

5. Requests the Administrator to submit, in a timely manner, the country cooperation framework as formulated by the country concerned, in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme, to the Executive Board for approval. The country cooperation framework should be based on national plans and priorities, country-specific circumstances and lessons learnt from previous cooperation as well as the mandate and programme priorities of the United Nations Development Programme. The country cooperation framework shall outline the overall strategy proposed for United Nations Development Programme cooperation. The country cooperation framework should set measurable targets where possible for the results and impact expected as well as outline management arrangements for execution and implementation, coordination, monitoring and review as well as a resource mobilization strategy and target for all resources managed by the United Nations Development Programme;

6. Decides that country cooperation frameworks shall be approved as submitted, without presentation and discussion, unless at least five members have informed the secretariat in writing before the meeting of their wish to bring a particular country cooperation framework before the Executive Board. The secretariat shall inform all members of the Board of which country cooperation frameworks will be presented to the Board;

7. Requests the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 a proposed format and timing for review reports, based on information generated from the new system for programme monitoring, periodic review and oversight, the actual assignment of resources, available relevant evaluations and the periodic review of the operational activities of every country office, that will enable the Board to review the actual implementation of the country cooperation framework in each country and lessons learnt as part of the preparation for the next country cooperation framework;

8. Decides that the Administrator shall submit the review reports to the Executive Board, highlighting a representative sample of reports covering a range of programmes that are representative in terms of quality and geography. If necessary, the Board will then provide guidance on future programming. The agreed outcome of the Executive Board review should be a fully integrated part of the preparation for the next country cooperation framework;

10. Requests the Administrator to make available to members of the programme, on a regular basis, lists of available reports on periodic reviews and evaluations of country-programme activities;

11. Decides that the arrangements described above shall take immediate effect, except those contained in paragraph 6, which shall take effect in January 1997 and will be reviewed at the annual session 1997 in light of experience gained therefrom, also taking into consideration country-programming arrangements in the United Nations Children's Fund.

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IV. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

71. One delegation made a general statement under this item. The speaker cited the disturbing picture presented by the Administrator regarding the mobilization of resources to advance social and economic development in developing countries. He hoped that the international community would work together towards resource mobilization to ensure that the efforts of developing countries were encouraged through both bilateral and multilateral support.

72. He commended UNDP, UNFPA and other United Nations specialized agencies for providing the necessary technical and financial support to ensure that the development efforts and activities of small island states

were realized. His delegation encouraged the international community to take further action to implement the Barbados Programme of Action, which was agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Small Island Developing Countries. Positive efforts were being made by UNDP, in particular within the Global Environment Facility. UNDP and other organizations were called on to work closely with Governments, regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations to identify priority development areas to achieve a sustainable level of development in island countries. He asked that the Administrator provide information on development activities undertaken by UNDP in accordance with the Barbados Programme of Action.

Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

73. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific introduced the note by the Administrator on assistance to Myanmar (DP/1996/4) and the notes of the Administrator on the extension of the fifth country programme for Fiji (DP/CP/FIJ/5/EXTENSION I) and Tonga (DP/CP/TON/5/EXTENSION I). UNDP sought approval of the activities outlined in document DP/1996/4. He conveyed the request of the Administrator that subparagraph (c) in paragraph 36 of DP/1996/4 be deleted.

74. In general, delegations commended and endorsed the project activities under the human development initiative (HDI) and supported the proposals made by the Administrator for extension of those activities. Concern was expressed about the human rights situation and lack of progress on democracy in Myanmar, and several delegations called for compliance with relevant General Assembly resolutions while others cautioned UNDP against politicizing the development process in Myanmar. Some delegations urged adoption of good governance practices in the country while noting that UNDP activities were clearly focused on the poor, in conformity with Governing Council decision 93/21 on assistance to Myanmar. Those delegations stressed the need for close monitoring and evaluation of project activities and requested that annual reviews on the progress of those activities be reported to the first regular sessions of the Executive Board in 1997 and 1998. They called for continuing mechanisms to ensure that resources allocated to projects reached the identified target groups and worked for capacity-building of national non-governmental organizations.

75. One delegation, while strongly supporting the proposals of the Administrator, expressed regret that there was no opportunity for policy-level interventions for poverty eradication and that UNDP projects were limited to developing micro-models at the grass-roots level. The representative also referred to the geographical scope of operation, with only 14 townships being covered so far and only 20 in the proposed extended phase of the HDI. His delegation stressed the importance of continuing work in the border areas especially to follow up on the work undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Drug Control Programme. He expressed the intention of his Government to pursue cooperative arrangements with UNDP in the border areas. In that context, he singled out food security and the plan of his Government to supply agricultural machinery and fertilizers to the people in

those areas. He also called for the use of micro-credit facilities for the poor in UNDP projects to enable farmers to purchase agricultural machinery and fertilizers.

76. Several delegations emphasized the need for UNDP to maintain neutrality, universality and non-conditionality. UNDP projects were addressing areas of high-priority humanitarian needs and poverty alleviation. Long-term strategies, programmes and projects were needed to address those needs effectively. A number of delegations hoped that Myanmar would soon revert to status as a programme country.

77. In response to the issues raised by the various delegations, clarifications were provided by the Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Resident Representative in Myanmar. They assured the delegations that the comments and observations made would be taken fully into account in the design and implementation of projects, which would continue to be approved on a project-by-project basis by the Administrator.

78. A final statement was made by the delegation of Myanmar.

79. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/01. Assistance to Myanmar

The Executive Board

1. Approves continued funding of activities in the sectors previously outlined in Governing Council decision 93/21;

2. Authorizes the Administrator, on a project-by-project basis, to approve projects for a total amount not exceeding $52.076 million during the period 1996-1997;

3. Requests the Administrator to submit, at its first regular session 1997 and at its first regular session 1998, an assessment of the extent to which the assistance provided to Myanmar continues to meet the provisions of present Executive Board decisions, including Governing Council decision 93/21.

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Extension of the fifth country programme for Fiji (DP/CP/FIJ/5/EXTENSION I)

80. The Executive Board took note of the extension of the fifth country programme for Fiji (DP/CP/FIJ/5/EXTENSION I).

Extension of the fifth country programme for Tonga (DP/CP/TON/5/EXTENSION I)

81. The Executive Board took note of the extension of the fifth country programme for Tonga (DP/CP/TON/5/EXTENSION I).

First country cooperation framework for Bangladesh (DP/CCF/BGD/1)

82. The Resident Representative in Bangladesh introduced the first country cooperation framework (CCF) for Bangladesh (DP/CCF/BGD/1), informed the Executive Board of the process followed for its preparation, and highlighted major features of the framework. The paramount objective of the CCF for Bangladesh was poverty eradication, with improved environmental management, non-formal employment-generation, advancement of women and improved public management for good governance as subsidiary objectives.

83. The Permanent Secretary of the Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh, stressed Government ownership of the CCF, which had been developed jointly with UNDP and was in line with national development priorities. He emphasized the need for flexibility in the implementation of the framework and called for the immediate release of resources so that programme development and implementation could proceed without delay.

84. Many delegations expressed satisfaction with the framework, citing its focus on poverty eradication. It was a good example of cooperation at the country level. Clarification was sought on a number of issues, including the need for greater specificity on the comparative advantage of UNDP in responding to the country's needs. Some asked about the importance of an improved public management system, particularly as it related to timely and efficient implementation of aid-financed projects. Others cited the need to pay equal attention to the support of expansion in formal-sector employment in labour-intensive industries. The view was expressed that the relative emphasis on local level versus central-level interventions might need some modification in order to give greater weight to the central level, where UNDP had a traditional comparative advantage. Consideration of support to micro-credits, activities in follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, and governance and elections was also raised. A few delegations asked for clarification regarding action taken to achieve resource mobilization targets, and also about the time frame for availability of lines 1.1.1. and 1.1.2 resources. One delegation noted that the CCF supported the trend of work with non-governmental organizations, which had been very favourable in Bangladesh. A query was raised on the format of the CCF, mainly relating to its length, which exceeded the maximum limit set in the new programming guidelines.

85. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Resident Representative in Bangladesh provided clarifications to the questions. In terms of format, the CCF had been prepared prior to the elaboration of the new guidelines on programming and therefore it should be viewed as a pragmatic response to the situation and not as a precedent in procedural terms. The framework was less specific than the former country programmes as a result of the participatory and bottom-up planning process undertaken for development of the programmes. The major criterion for selection of projects and programmes had been their response to the needs of the deprived segments of the population, as elicited through an open-ended process. Care would be taken to carry out baseline surveys and to put in place solid monitoring mechanisms aimed at measuring the impact of all interventions. The emphasis placed on non-formal employment should not be interpreted as underplaying the importance of formal employment, which was clearly a key element in poverty

eradication. UNDP had not yet received a request to undertake activities in the area of micro-credits.

86. The country office and the Government would adopt a flexible approach in terms of relative allocation of resources to interventions at the central and local levels. The suggested distribution contained in the CCF should be regarded as indicative. The Executive Board was informed that when it approved the CCF, line 1.1.1 could be released and with further programme development line 1.1.2 could become available.

87. In conclusion, the Permanent Secretary of the Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh, thanked the delegates for their support and assured them that the Government was intent on tackling the issue of administrative reform.

88. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Bangladesh (DP/CCF/BGD/1).

Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

UNDP cooperation with Aruba (DP/1996/5)

89. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean introduced the note by the Administrator on UNDP cooperation with Aruba. He stated that in 1986, Aruba had become an autonomous entity within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with a status identical to that of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles. The first country programme for Aruba, which originally encompassed the years 1987 to 1991, had been extended twice, until the end of 1993. At its third regular session 1994, the Executive Board had authorized the Administrator to approve programmes and projects for Aruba on a case-by-case basis.

90. As a net contributor country since the fourth programming cycle, Aruba financed all programmes with its own resources and external resources to which it had access. The resources available for the programming period under consideration, 1994-1996, amounted to $913,038.

91. UNDP cooperation with the Government of Aruba would concentrate on economic policy and diversification, social development and environmental and natural resources management. Those areas had been identified as the ones in which UNDP had a comparative advantage in terms of expertise, experience and cost when compared with other providers.

92. The Executive Board took note of the note of the Administrator on UNDP cooperation with Aruba (DP/1996/5).

UNDP cooperation with Trinidad and Tobago (DP/1996/6)

93. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean introduced the note by the Administrator on UNDP cooperation with Trinidad and Tobago. The programming period under consideration comprised a period of three years, 1994-1996. The fourth

country programme had been extended twice, until the end of 1993. In 1994, the Executive Board had authorized the Administrator to approve programmes and projects for Trinidad and Tobago on a case-by-case basis.

94. As UNDP assistance represented only 0.2 per cent of total multilateral and bilateral assistance to Trinidad and Tobago, the Government had opted to channel UNDP resources into high-leverage, high-impact programmes, in line with the focus of UNDP on sustainable human development.

95. UNDP support concentrated on the improvement of national environmental management and on restructuring the delivery system for social services. In particular, UNDP had sponsored public consultations that would contribute to the formulation and adoption of modern environmental policy and legislation. It had supported the establishment of the Environmental Management Agency, the strengthening of environmental non-governmental organizations and the design and implementation of a comprehensive public education programme on environmental issues.

96. Support from delegations was expressed for the activities of UNDP in Trinidad and Tobago, citing in particular the focus on improving environmental management and the delivery of social services. Assistance to non-governmental organizations was also appreciated. One delegation praised the mention in paragraph 12 of document DP/1996/6 of the significance of the UNDP contribution in the design of a participatory approach to social development that could serve as a model for countries at a similarly high stage of development.

97. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago noted the good relationship between his Government and UNDP. There had been a positive impact on poverty alleviation resulting from cooperation with UNDP. National elections in his country in November 1995 had resulted in a new Government, which was in the process of debating its first budget in Parliament. As a result, he noted that the country cooperation framework for Trinidad and Tobago, originally expected to be before the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996, would possibly be delayed.

98. The Executive Board took note of the note of the Administrator on UNDP cooperation with Trinidad and Tobago (DP/1996/6).

Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Independence bonus for Slovakia

99. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs recalled that at its third regular session 19[illegible], the Executive Board had considered the eligibility of an independence bonus for several UNDP programme countries. The annex to Board decision 95/26 contained a list of 15 countries eligible for an independence bonus.

100. At the third regular session 1995, Slovakia had requested that its eligibility for an independence bonus be determined. In response, UNDP had requested an opinion from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. The opinion confirmed that Slovakia was a newly independent state and thus met

the indispensable legal precondition of eligibility to receive an independence bonus. Accordingly, UNDP would add Slovakia to the list of countries eligible for an independence bonus, as listed in the annex to Executive Board decision 95/26.

101. The Executive Board took note of the statement of the Assistant Administrator.

Assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina

102. The representative of Slovakia introduced a draft decision, co-sponsored by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Malaysia, Morocco, Slovakia and the United States, on assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following the recent peace agreement, there was an urgent need to create conditions conducive to its implementation. Military assistance should go hand in hand with development assistance, reconstruction and rehabilitation in the war-striken country. The assistance of the United Nations, in particular through UNDP in its leading role, was essential. In order to expedite reconstruction and rehabilitation, which were interlinked with the implementation of the annexes of the Dayton agreement concerning fair elections and the return of refugees, the establishment of a UNDP office in Sarajevo was of paramount importance. In that regard, the draft decision proposed that additional funding be allocated to Bosnia and Herzegovina for programmes to facilitate the resettlement and reintegration of the displaced population and other reconstruction and rehabilitation operations.

103. The Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina noted that while UNDP had not been previously directly involved in his country, it was crucial, now that the peace agreements had been concluded, that UNDP serve as a development partner in re-building the war-torn country. Bosnia and Herzegovina now belonged to the lowest scale of least developed countries, with no gross national product measured during the past four years. Reconstruction must be swift, he urged, and UNDP could play a vital role in coordination in that effort. A Standard Basic Agreement had been signed with UNDP following the recent visit of a UNDP team to Sarajevo. He hoped that the Executive Board would agree to establish a country office in Sarajevo.

104. All delegations taking the floor expressed full support for the need for UNDP to have a role in the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many speakers supported vigorously the opening of a UNDP office in Sarajavo and funding of $5 million for a programme in the country. It was clear that while it was a relatively small amount, UNDP could be instrumental in coordinating funding from other donors. Several delegations enquired as to whether the funding could be obtained through line 1.1.3, which was meant for countries in special circumstances, approved by the Executive Board in its decision 95/23. One delegation noted that the activities of UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina would enable UNDP to fulfil its role of in post-crisis situations; lessons learned could be reported to the Board.

105. Additional details about the role of UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina were requested. Several Executive Board members also asked if there would be overlap with the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. One delegation suggested that the proposed office could be called the "United Nations field office for development".

106. One delegation, while supporting UNDP assistance to the reconstruction of the country, questioned the necessity of approval by the Executive Board of a decision of such a nature, asking whether it was in violation of the rules and regulations of the Board, inter alia, whether the Board should avoid political discussions and micro-management of UNDP. The delegation emphasized that the Board should therefore avoid approval of funding for isolated cases of special situations. The approval of a new country office should be decided upon within the normal budget procedures of UNDP. Furthermore, the Administrator could use available funds approved by the Board for the fifth cycle. The decision to borrow against budget line 1.1.3 (special cases) of the new programming system should remain with the Administrator. The delegation also proposed coordination and cooperation within the United Nation system and with other donors and asked whether UNDP planned a round-table meeting for Bosnia. Several delegations supported the proposal to take a formal decision, which in their view did not involve micro-management.

107. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States stated that UNDP had taken immediate action following the peace agreement, sending a five-person mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina to explore the possibility of establishing a UNDP office in Sarajevo. Extensive consultations with other parts of the United Nations system were conducted, including UNHCR, which was pleased to learn of the intended actions of UNDP. He pointed out that the $5 million was seed money that would be used to create an umbrella facility to coordinate consultancies in the country. It would also be used to support governance at the local level and for institution-building in areas of UNDP comparative advantage. At the present time, only $200,000, from the fifth cycle indicative planning figure, was available for programming in the country. A round-table meeting for Bosnia was not currently planned and would depend on the overall resource mobilization situation.

108. The Associate Administrator explained that use of line 1.1.3 meant getting an advance against funds that would be available in 1997, when the successor programming arrangements came into effect. The Administrator was already in the process of establishing a presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of giving consideration to funding for the programme in the country, including through the use of 1.1.3. Furthermore, he stated that a formal decision of the Board was not necessary but that it would be desirable.

109. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/11. UNDP Assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Executive Board

1. Takes into account the recent peace agreements, which foresaw the urgent need to undertake massive reconstruction and rehabilitation activities, as well as the urgent need to restart the development process in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

2. Emphasizes the importance of the creation of conditions conducive to the reconstruction and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and encourages Member States to provide assistance;

3. Takes note of the request from the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to receive necessary assistance from the United Nations Development Programme at this critical juncture;

4. Welcomes the intention of the Administrator to earmark additional funds for programming activities in 1996; and recommends that the amount should be at least $5 million, and that these funds, to the extent possible, should come from available unprogrammed Special Programme Resources. They are to be utilized for programmes developed by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme;

5. Recommends that, if necessary, additional funds may be allocated by borrowing against line 1.1.3: resources for development in countries in special circumstances. Such action shall not be regarded as a precedent for similar country-specific allocations, which will be based in the future on guidelines being developed for the use of this facility;

6. Welcomes the decision of the Administrator to establish a United Nations Development Programme country office in Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as possible;

7. Further requests the Administrator to report on the progress of the implementation of the present decision at the second regular session 1996.

19 January 1996

V. INTER-AGENCY PROCUREMENT SERVICES OFFICE

110. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Finance and Administration, introduced document DP/1996/7 on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) in the context of its two basic mandates: (a) research and development activities in support of the inter-agency role of IAPSO; and (b) the provision of services, including advisory, training and direct procurement, for UNDP, the United Nations system, and the development community.

111. The Assistant Administrator also indicated that the activities and role of IAPSO had recently been reviewed as part of the budget strategy for the 1996-1997 biennium, incorporating recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors. With regard to the Office's research and development activities, the Assistant Administrator highlighted that IAPSO was exploring ways by which some of those activities could become self-financing, while keeping a small core capacity to support its inter-agency role. On the direct procurement services offered by IAPSO to the United Nations system and the development community, he indicated that those activities, initiated in 1985 following a decision by the Administrator and in line with the mandate given by the Governing Council, had grown significantly and had become a main source of extrabudgetary income for IAPSO. The Assistant Administrator emphasized that UNDP saw a continuing demand and growth potential in the future for those

services. For that reason, UNDP was seeking from the Executive Board the reaffirmation of the mandates of IAPSO and the endorsement to continue with those activities.

112. The Assistant Administrator requested confirmation from the Executive Board of its decision 95/28, paragraphs 41 and 42, on the IAPSO budget strategy for 1996-1997, which had been provisional pending review of IAPSO activities at the current session. He indicated that the Administrator proposed to consolidate the reporting on IAPSO activities and procurement statistics in a biennial report to be submitted at the third regular session 1996. The Assistant Administrator also reported that IAPSO was exploring possibilities of cooperation with other United Nations organizations, such as the United Nations Office for Project Services. He invited delegates to visit a IAPSO exhibit located in the conference room.

113. Several delegations expressed satisfaction with the report of the Administrator on IAPSO and supported the proposals made by the Administrator, in particular the efforts of IAPSO to make some of its activities self-financing, the continuation of direct procurement activities and the biennial reporting to the Board. Some delegations commended in particular the efforts made by IAPSO in promoting procurement from developing countries and recommended that those activities be increased. In response to an enquiry on the utilization of accumulated unencumbered income for 1995, the Assistant Administrator explained that the budget strategy for IAPSO had been based on the utilization of accumulated unspent income to finance some activities of IAPSO under the extrabudgetary account. The unspent income would also be used to set up a fund against contingencies and risks. One delegation asked for a summary of the United Nations Board of Auditors recommendations with regard to the audit of IAPSO. The Assistant Administrator indicated that the reaffirmation of the mandates of IAPSO, the strengthening of information systems, the provision of a fund for contingencies, and the separate disclosure of IAPSO activities in the UNDP financial statements were among the actions recommended by the Board of Auditors. In response to a question about the effective date of the re-classification for the level of the post for the Director, IAPSO, the Assistant Administrator confirmed that it would be effective for the 1996-1997 budget.

114. In response to questions by some delegations about IAPSO activities in coordinated procurement with other United Nations agencies, the Director of IAPSO indicated that initiatives to date had included work on standardization, drawing on the joint capacities and expertise of each of the agencies concerned.

115. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/02. Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO)

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (DP/1996/7) and expresses appreciation for the important inter-agency cooperation work undertaken by the Office within the framework of the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group, which has proven to have an important impact on programme deliveries, economy of operations and transparency in the use of public funds;

2. Reaffirms that under its mandate for research and development on procurement-related matters for the United Nations system, the Inter-Agency Procurement Office shall continue to promote inter-agency cooperation and coordination, where possible finding ways of making such activities self-financing;

3. Also reaffirms that, under its mandate for procurement services, the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office shall continue to provide a full range of such procurement services to the organizations of the United Nations system and to partners in development outside the United Nations system, including non-governmental organizations, Governments and government agencies, building upon the capacity it has developed in common-user items, as defined by the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group, and other product groups for which the Administrator shall determine that the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office has the requisite capacity;

4. Encourages the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office to seek ways of coordinated procurement arrangements with United Nations entities to draw on respective strengths of each entity and thus provide better services to the development community, and in particular to programme countries;

5. Requests the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office to present a consolidated biennial report to the Executive Board on its activities, including direct procurement, and to provide a full statistical report on United Nations system procurement at its third regular session 1996;

6. Confirms paragraphs 41 to 43 of its decision 95/28 with regard to the 1996-1997 biennial budget for Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office, including the modified staffing table and revised grade structures of IAPSO.

17 January 1996

VI. UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

116. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations technical cooperation activities (DP/1996/8). He noted that the responsibilities assigned to DDSMS by the General Assembly were designed to sharpen the focus and enhance the impact of technical cooperation activities undertaken by the United Nations. The Department was engaged in substantive work and support to technical cooperation in public administration and development management, energy and the environment, and assistance to countries in crisis.

117. The Under-Secretary-General presented an overview of DDSMS activities and funding arrangements. He noted that the Department was the substantive secretariat for an item to be taken up at the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development. Pursuant to Executive Board decision 94/27 on United Nations technical cooperation activities, in which the Executive Board had urged UNDP to consider greater utilization of the technical capacities of the Department, collaboration with UNDP had increased. That collaboration was reflected in a series of senior management and working-level meetings and increased UNDP funding of DDSMS substantive work. Also, UNDP, DDSMS and the United Nations Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS) were strengthening their relations in the context of the UNOPS Management Coordination Committee. An early focus was division of labour among the three entities in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

118. Several delegations requested more details on the level of collaboration between DDSMS and UNDP in areas of common concern, and on the comparative advantage of DDSMS activities, so as to avoid duplication of functions and to ensure efficient use of resources. Some stated that many of the activities described in the document were already being undertaken by UNDP or other United Nations organizations. One delegation queried whether the planned activities might not be too ambitious.

119. Further information on the division of labour among UNDP, UNOPS and DDSMS in reconstruction and rehabilitation of war-torn societies was requested. One delegation expressed appreciation for the high quality of the Department's work in technical cooperation, and in particular for its work in preparations for discussions at the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development. One speaker asked for more information on linkages between DDSMS, UNDP and recipient Governments at the country level.

120. One delegation asked for more information on trends in funding and expenditure. Other speakers queried whether UNDP would undertake an evaluation, including a value-for-money audit, on the DDSMS activities it financed.

121. Noting the draft decision included in document DP/1996/8, one delegation suggested that paragraphs 3 and 4 could be deleted as they referred to activities already undertaken by DDSMS, and that reference to a UNDP evaluation of the Department's work should be included.

122. The Under-Secretary-General stated that the Department's relation to UNDP was similar to that of the specialized agencies, in particular that it was engaged through UNDP funding, and at the request of Governments, to provide expertise in specific fields. Total project expenditures by DDSMS were declining, owing to the rise of national execution of projects, the decreased involvement of DDSMS in project implementation and the decline of UNDP resources. However, the Department was moving upstream, as intended by the Executive Board, and was increasingly engaged in UNDP-funded actions by United Nations agencies for technical support at the programme and project levels. The Department was not duplicating activities already being undertaken by UNDP since there was complementarity based on a functional division of labour. The UNDP/DDSMS/UNOPS paper on post-conflict reconstruction had been circulated in draft among members of the UNOPS Management Coordination Committee and should soon be available to interested delegations. DDSMS was closely linked to UNDP and Governments at the country level. He noted that UNDP-funded project activities of DDSMS were subject to evaluation by UNDP, and were carried out with the full involvement of UNDP country offices and national Governments.

123 The Administrator stated that DDSMS and UNDP cooperated very well. The paper on post-conflict reconstruction had been a genuine collaborative effort of UNDP, UNOPS and DDSMS.

124. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/04. United Nations technical cooperation activities

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (DP/1996/8);

2. Invites the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations entities and departments to give further attention to strengthened programmatic linkages within their respective mandates;

3. Recommends that the United Nations Development Programme consider including in its evaluation work plan an evaluation of the activities of the Department for Development Support and Management Services that it finances, including a value-for-money audit.

19 January 1996

VII. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

125. The Associate Administrator introduced the item, which covered the financial and managerial issues facing the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and gave an update on the status of the UNIFEM external evaluation of the Fund. The evaluation would provide an input into ensuring that UNIFEM was strategically positioned to play the major role called for by the Fourth World Conference on Women.

126. Aggressive management measures and vigorous resource mobilization had resulted in great strides by UNIFEM in recovering from its financial problems of 1995. The Fund had ended the year 1995 with an estimated $3.9 million balance in general resources, without UNIFEM having to make use of the overdraft facility from UNDP. The Associate Administrator expressed the appreciation of UNDP for the constructive concern of the Executive Board and for the increased financial contribution of several donors. Board support had ensured that UNIFEM remained a strong and viable organization for promoting the advancement of women. A rigorous review of UNIFEM finances would be maintained through the monthly meetings convened by the Associate Administrator, as would in-depth quarterly reviews by the UNDP Bureau for Finance and Administration. UNDP would continue to provide UNIFEM with the services of an outposted finance officer to assist them in ensuring that strict financial reporting was carried out in a timely manner.

127. The Administrator had been cooperating closely with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to launch the in-depth evaluation of UNIFEM programmes. The evaluation would provide an important opportunity to review UNIFEM performance and ensure that its programmes were strategically focused.

128. In November 1995, the Administrator had transmitted to all Executive Board members a project document and finalized terms of reference for the evaluation. He then requested the Executive Director of UNOPS to select a team of consultants on an international competitive basis to undertake the review. Proposals had been solicited from a short list of ten entities that included organizations from both donor and developing countries, with the exclusion of those that had done significant work with UNIFEM in the past. An expert on gender issues had worked closely with UNOPS in the evaluation of proposals received. UNOPS was expected to conclude contract negotiations by the end of January 1996 with the designated entity.

129. The UNIFEM evaluation would be launched in mid-February 1996, with visits to countries in each region where UNIFEM programmes were in place. In Africa, the review would be conducted in French-and English-speaking countries. A final evaluation report would be submitted at the third regular session 1996.

130. The Administrator had established a trust fund for the evaluation and had sent a copy of the document to all Executive Board members to facilitate pledging. Out of the total evaluation budget of $289,999, Member States had pledged $235,000 and UNDP had received $197,000, for which UNDP was grateful. Other countries were urged to contribute.

131. As a result of issues raised by the UNIFEM situation and in an effort to respond fully to the concerns of the Executive Board regarding accountability and responsibility, in pursuance of Board decision 95/32, the Administrator had launched a review, with a team of outside experts, of UNDP mechanisms for ensuring managerial, financial and programme accountability. Its primary purpose was to look at the existing mechanisms in UNDP in order to rationalize them and identify any gaps. The review team would meet with the United Nations Secretariat and United Nations funds and agencies to ensure consistency. Specific attention would be given to linking managerial, programme and financial accountability with the performance appraisal review process for senior managers. A report would be prepared on the issue for Board review at an informal session to be held by early May 1996. The formal presentation to the Board would take place at the third regular session 1996.

132. The Associate Administrator underlined the importance of the maintenance of the highest standards of accountability in UNDP. On behalf of the Administrator and himself, he assured the Executive Board that it would be a personal and organizational priority in 1996.

133. The Director of UNIFEM informed the Executive Board that during 1995, as a result of careful management, projected expenditures had been limited to $12.86 million. Contributions to general resources had increased to $15.011 million, through the generosity of donors. That amount did not include 1995 pledges, which would be received in early 1996 and which would be included in expected income for 1996. Estimates of the general resource balance of UNIFEM as of 31 December 1995 stood at $3.90 million.

134. The increase in contributions to general resources was partially owing to one-time special contributions by Governments. Fourteen Governments had also increased their contributions in 1995, and there had been an increase in the number of contributors, thanks to a concerted effort on the part of UNIFEM to increase its resource base. The trend of increasing contributions was continuing in 1996, as was the addition of new donors. The Pledging Conference in November 1995 had resulted in $5.71 million in firm pledges from 30 countries, an increase of $1.52 million over pledges made at the previous year's Pledging Conference, and an addition of 13 countries making pledges. When combined with informal contacts with donors who had not yet pledged, indications were that UNIFEM could expect to receive an estimated $12.45 million from 56 donor countries in 1996. Moreover, UNIFEM had received $.450 million in private contributions from its national committees, foundations and private individuals in 1995, much of it contributed to specific projects and therefore not shown in the general resources account.

135. The written statement of the Executive Director was distributed. It included tables showing UNIFEM general resources projections as presented to the Executive Board at its annual session 1995 (DP/1995/33, table 3) and preliminary projections as at 31 December 1995. Project expenditures in 1995 were now estimated at $9.75 million, with administrative and technical costs in 1995 totalling $3.1 million.

136. The Director gave the Executive Board an overview of the planned programme of UNIFEM following the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Beijing Platform for Action had provided a strong endorsement of the mission,

policy framework, and strategies of UNIFEM. The new programming focus of UNIFEM was on the economic and political empowerment of women, areas which would build on the Fund's comparative advantage. Projects that contributed to the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action would be within the $4 million authorized by the Board in its decision 95/18. She noted that even taking into account that amount, a surplus of over $5 million was projected for UNIFEM at the end of 1996.

137. It was not yet possible to provide a firm calculation of the notional operational reserve, as all information on actual 1995 expenditures was not yet available. However, the best estimate for the notional operational reserve for 1997-1999 was $1.3 million. UNIFEM therefore requested the Executive Board to authorize the Fund to initiate another $2 million of new projects in 1996, an action that would not jeopardize the stability of the Fund. It would provide UNIFEM with the resources needed to respond more effectively to the empowerment of women in developing countries following the Fourth World Conference on Women.

138. UNIFEM would work with national Governments to assist in the preparation of national action plans for the implementation of the Platform of Action. It would empower women to participate effectively in the implementation of the conference outcomes, support women's organizations and provide technical support to the resident coordinator system in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Fund had convened its annual strategic planning workshop in January 1996 in order to operationalize its programme directions. They looked forward to the external evaluation of UNIFEM as an opportunity for in-depth review of its programmes and procedures.

139. While some delegations underlined their appreciation of the work of UNIFEM and expressed support for approval by the Executive Board of $2 million for new activities, others were reluctant to endorse the amount without details on how the monies would be used or before having the results of the external evaluation of the Fund. More information on the intended programmes was needed. It was confirmed that the $2 million did not appear in table B of the Executive Director's statement.

140. Some concern was expressed that the report on accountability called for in decision 95/32 would not be available until the third regular session 1996. The Associate Administrator explained that UNDP was taking advantage of the request of the Executive Board to undertake an expanded review of accountability that would go beyond what the Board had requested. UNDP would be examining issues in connection with programme, managerial and financial accountability. An external team would carry out the review and issue a draft report in March 1996. The major findings of that report would be discussed in an informal meeting of the Board to be convened in May 1996. The Administrator's report on accountability would be reviewed by the Board at its third regular session 1996.

141. The Executive Director of UNIFEM explained that the resource base for empowerment of women was very small and that many developing countries relied on UNIFEM to assist in the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action. It was important that the momentum of processes at the field level not be lost. The $2 million in new projects would be used for activities in the areas of women's economic and political empowerment, especially in reducing

the feminization of poverty, in building women's leadership, in natural resources management, on issues of governance and in eliminating all forms of violence against women. It was imperative that the Executive Board respond quickly.

142. One delegation requested that the Director of UNIFEM inform the Executive Board on the intended use of the additional funding prior to approval of the draft decision. The Director responded that a list of projects and ideas for use of the funding was available to the Board.

143. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/08. United Nations Development Fund for Women

The Executive Board

1. Takes note with appreciation of the information provided by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women regarding the improvement of the financial situation of the Fund;

2. Authorizes the United Nations Development Fund for Women, on an exceptional basis in view of the positive balance of resources, to formulate additional new projects in 1996 for a total amount not exceeding $2 million;

3. Requests that the United Nations Development Fund for Women in future submit in writing to the Executive Board, in accordance with the established rules for the submission of documentation, all proposals requiring action by the Board.

19 January 1996

UNDP/UNFPA JOINT SEGMENT

VIII. UNDP/UNFPA: FOLLOW-UP TO AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

United Nations Development Programme

144. The Associate Administrator introduced the note by the Administrator on the follow-up to and preparation for the Economic and Social Council (DP/1996/9). The document contained information on activities undertaken or planned by UNDP to implement the main recommendations of Council resolutions 1995/50 and 1995/51. A more detailed report on the follow-up would be available at the annual session 1996. He noted in particular that the report included information on priorities for UNDP assistance, follow-up to international conferences, and monitoring and evaluation.

145. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support informed the Executive Board of a series of informal consultations during February and March 1996 on the thematic priorities of UNDP. A schedule for the consultations was distributed to the Executive Board. Also, given the postponement of the joint UNDP/UNFPA agenda item on the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to the second regular session 1996, the Assistant Administrator announced the availability of a statement by UNDP on the topic.

146. One delegation, supported by others, urged both UNDP and UNFPA to provide full details in a future report on the effectiveness of country and intercountry programmes in order to show that funding was being used appropriately. More information on problems faced by the organizations in responding to Economic and Social Council resolutions was asked for, to enable the Executive Board to provide better guidance in preparation for the 1996 session of the Council. Issues relating to coordination in the field were of particular relevance. More specific information on implementation by UNDP of the outcomes of the recent major international conferences was also sought.

147. In the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, UNDP was asked to provide information on the role of the resident coordinator in crises, coordination of appeals, the relation of the round-table mechanism to consolidated appeals by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, overlap with other United Nations organizations in specific activities and on the resource situation of its emergency response division.

148. Noting the difference in format with a similar report prepared by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a request was made for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to discuss the exercise, with a view to preparing more comparable reports.

149. Several delegations pointed out that the reference in paragraph 3 of document DP/1996/9 to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51 was incorrect as it stood ("the Economic and Social Council requests funds and

programmes to give high priority in their budgets to least developed countries, low-income countries and countries in transition") and should be amended as follows: "In its resolution 1995/51, the Economic and Social Council requests funds and programmes ... to continue to give high priority in their budget allocations to least developed countries, low-income countries and Africa"; the resolution also requests the United Nations funds and programmes "to take into account the specific needs and requirements of countries with economies in transition".

150. In answer to the questions raised, the Assistant Administrator stated that UNDP hoped to build more capacity in the emergency response area and confirmed that UNDP would quote the relevant paragraphs of Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51 in future references to priorities for UNDP assistance.

United Nations Population Fund

151. In his introduction, the Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Administration explained that document DP/FPA/1996/6 was designed to provide preliminary information on how UNFPA planned to report on ECOSOC resolutions 1995/50, 1995/51 and 1995/56. He emphasized those aspects relating to increased cooperation and coordination among the United Nations funds and programmes, including progress in the harmonization of programme cycles and increasing numbers of joint presentations of country programmes. In this context, the Deputy Executive Director also highlighted a new initiative of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) for the development of joint information systems and situational analyses at the country level.

152. One delegation noted favourably UNFPA's comments on harmonization efforts and on the linkages between UNFPA's strategy development exercises and the Country Strategy Notes. Similarly, the work of UNFPA in emergency humanitarian assistance was commended. However, the delegation expressed concern about the lack of more precise information from UNFPA regarding the cost-effectiveness of administrative services.

153. The Deputy Executive Director thanked the Executive Board for the valuable suggestions and noted his agreement with the need for coordination and comparability in the reporting to ECOSOC. He informed the Board that discussions on this matter had been held at the last JCGP General Meeting in December 1995 and resulted in the establishment of a working group to ensure the necessary coordination. He also stressed that UNFPA would ensure the inclusion of more specific information on the cost-effectiveness of administrative services in its report to ECOSOC.

154. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/05. Preparation of reports for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme contained in document DP/1996/9, and of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population

Fund contained in document DP/FPA/1996/6, and the comments made thereon;

2. Urges the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to ensure that their reports to the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996 fully address issues to be discussed in accordance with relevant decisions and resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly, including Council resolutions 1995/50, 1995/51 and 1995/56 and General Assembly resolution 50/120;

3. Requests that the content of the reports of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996 be such as to enable the Council to compare achievements made by each organization and to identify problems and recommend appropriate actions, on issues relating to, inter alia, allocation of resources, harmonization of procedures and budget presentation, common administrative services and premises and monitoring and evaluation;

4. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, together with the Executive Directors of the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme, to agree on a common format and structure for their reports for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996, taking into account paragraph 2 of the present decision.

19 January 1996

IX. UNDP/UNFPA: JOINT AND CO-SPONSORED UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

155. The Executive Board decided to postpone consideration of the item to the second regular session 1996.

UNFPA SEGMENT

156. The Executive Director of UNFPA provided the Executive Board with a brief update of some developments of concern to UNFPA since the last session of the Board. She said that the income forecast for 1996 was relatively positive and thanked the major donors of UNFPA for their continuing strong support. She noted that the implementation of agreements reached at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) had definitely started at the country level and that notable progress had been made in a number of countries. For its part, UNFPA had earnestly assisted countries in implementing the ICPD in the areas of the Fund's mandate, guided by the new programme directions endorsed by the Board in its decision 95/15.

157. The Executive Director said that UNFPA had closely followed the General Assembly discussion on the triennial policy review and was fully committed to implementing the resulting resolution 50/120. She reiterated that UNFPA had always strongly supported, and continued to participate in, the resident coordinator system, and it was with full, continued respect and active support for such principles that the Fund had sought a change in the designation of the UNFPA Country Director as UNFPA Representative. She was pleased that the General Assembly had endorsed the change on 20 December 1995, since it would greatly facilitate the effectiveness of UNFPA in the field.

158. The Executive Director stated that UNFPA had prepared a mission statement based on document DP/1995/25 and the discussions that had taken place at the annual session 1995 of the Executive Board. The statement had been circulated to members of the Board. She noted that several delegations had recommended the one-page UNICEF mission statement as an excellent model. UNFPA would prepare a mission statement along similar lines and present it to the Board for its consideration at the annual session 1996.

159. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Executive Board decision 95/35, the Executive Director reported to the Board on possible measures to reduce further the appropriations for the UNFPA headquarters administrative and programme support services (APSS) budget by approximately $0.5 million. The measures would bring the volume reduction of the 1996-1997 headquarters budget from 1.2 per cent, as proposed in the budget proposal submitted to the Board at its third regular session 1995, to 2 per cent, as called for in decision 95/35. She said that the reduction would mainly be achieved by scaling down some administrative requirements, such as external printing, communications, maintenance of premises and equipment, and office supplies, and by postponing the replacement of office furniture and equipment. She said that the respective appropriations of the budget would be amended accordingly and reassured the Board that UNFPA intended to keep close track of budgetary expenditures in order to run the Fund's operations in the most efficient and economical manner.

X. STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATION OF UNFPA RESOURCES

160. The Executive Director introduced the report on a new approach for the allocation of UNFPA resources to country programmes (document DP/FPA/1996/1). She noted the importance and urgency of putting in place a new system for allocating the Fund's programming resources in order to reflect the new

priorities given to the Fund by the Executive Board in response to the recommendations of the ICPD. The new approach being presented to the Board was the result of much analysis within UNFPA and took into account the suggestions of the Executive Board both in its official deliberations and in informal consultations held periodically during 1995. In particular, the paper built on the report "Programme priorities and future directions of UNFPA in light of the International Conference on Population and Development" (DP/1995/25 and Corr. 1) submitted to the Executive Board at its annual session 1995.

161. The Executive Director stated that the basis for the new approach was the continuum of needs of countries for assistance and the progress that countries had made in population matters. The new approach took into account the major goals of the ICPD Programme of Action - access to reproductive health and family planning services, mortality reduction and universal basic education - and sought to measure them through seven indicators. The selected indicators had the merit of being widely available from official United Nations sources. Countries were categorized into three groups based on the number of threshold levels of the indicators they had met. Two options were presented in the report. Option I used income (gross national product (GNP) per capita) as a defining criterion along with the degree of attainment of ICPD goals according to the seven chosen indicators. Option II used only the number of threshold levels of the indicators met by a country in determining its placement. The Executive Director recommended the adoption of option II since it placed primacy of consideration on the attainment of the goals of the ICPD.

162. Numerous delegations welcomed the report and commended its thoroughness and the clarity with which it presented the proposed new approach for resource allocations. Many expressed a wide agreement with an approach that took the major goals enunciated by the ICPD as its point of departure. Several delegations also praised the incorporation into the report of two options, noting that it was something that Executive Board members had often asked for in the past and that it reflected suggestions made in informal consultations.

163. Many delegations referred to the seven indicators and their threshold levels. There was wide agreement that the indicators were adequate measurements of the ICPD goals although some delegations noted that a few of the indicators were not perfect proxies for the underlying goals. They were of the opinion, nonetheless, that the indicators were the best currently available for all countries. Numerous delegations also noted the appropriateness of the indicators threshold levels as presented in the report.

164. Many delegations noted with approval that, in the allocation proposal, the least developed countries (LDCs) would be accorded the priority recognized for them in the ICPD Programme of Action. A number of delegations also commended the specific provision in the proposed approach for allocations of resources to countries with economies in transition on a temporary basis. While most of those temporary resources would focus on needs in the central Asia and Kazakstan subregion, one delegation mentioned that some east European countries with economies in transition also needed temporary assistance in specific thematic areas. At the same time, several other delegations underscored the desirability of including in the report a confirmation of the need for special consideration for the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, given the severe economic circumstances of that region.

165. A large number of delegations preferred option II of the report as the better procedure for grouping countries, but many of them indicated that they would not be adverse to endorsing option I. On the other hand, several delegations preferred option I, citing the need to take the economic circumstances of the recipient countries into account through use of GNP per capita as a criterion. On the appropriateness of GNP per capita as an indicator, the opinion of delegations varied: some felt that it was a necessary element in resource allocations to assure that the neediest countries received greater consideration. Other delegations noted that GNP per capita was a poor and sometimes biased measure of human development and that its use would divert attention away from the new agenda emerging from the ICPD.

166 The share of resources of the proposed groupings (groups A, B and C) produced a variety of opinions among the delegations. A few delegations felt that, on a per capita basis, the share for group A countries - those furthest from meeting the ICPD goals - should be higher than the percentages recommended in the report. A number of other delegations, however, noted that overloading resources to group A would create the risk of undermining gains made by other countries in groups B and C and could conceivably contribute to some countries regressing in terms of the ICPD goals. They therefore urged that the resource-allocation system finally adopted should not penalize success and should protect gains made in national population programmes. In that regard, a large number of delegations supported the suggestion made by one delegation to maintain flexibility in allocating resources between the three groups by using bands of percentages rather than fixing one overall percentage for each group.

167. Several delegations made the suggestion that, to the extent possible, the data used for the seven indicators should be based on five-year averages rather than using information solely from the latest available year. That would avoid data anomalies that might vary from one year to another. The delegations also noted the desirability of incorporating into the resource-allocation procedure a waiting period of perhaps three years before moving a country from one group to another in the case of countries that had made progress according to the indicators being monitored. That, again, would be in the interest of assuring the viability of progress made in population programmes.

168. With regard to the distribution of resources to individual countries within each group, several suggestions were made. Many delegations suggested that using the adoption of a formal population policy as a criterion for resource distribution should be avoided as it could be misconstrued as an attempt to reinforce demographic targets. A number of delegations stressed the importance, as an essential criterion for resource distribution to individual countries, the commitment to the population and development goals as set out in the ICPD, while acknowledging the difficulty in quantitatively measuring such commitment. Many delegations were also of the view that more balance was needed in selecting criteria to assure that the integrated "population and development" approach endorsed at Cairo was retained. A few delegations additionally noted that, while population size was a needed criterion, population growth rate, especially in the case of small island developing countries, was also an important criterion that should be included in determining resource distribution to individual countries. A number of delegations did not favour

the use of absorptive capacity as a criterion while several others mentioned it as a possibility.

169. Although the delegations expressed overall satisfaction with the efforts of the Fund to propose a new approach for resource allocation in line with ICPD goals, many delegations felt that the process should mature further before a final decision was taken on such a vitally important matter. They therefore recommended that it be taken up again at the second regular session 1996 of the Executive Board. Among the suggestions that could be developed further, according to them, would be the combining of the differing relative shares recommended in the report for options I and II, thereby forming "bands" or ranges of shares for each of the three groups. Another suggestion for further analysis was to use GNP per capita as one of the criteria for distribution of resources to individual countries within each of the three groups.

170. In response to the many suggestions made, UNFPA provided several clarifications. South-South cooperation would apply to all countries with relevant experience to offer other developing countries and would not be confined to group C countries. While some of the indicators were inexact surrogates for the underlying goals they measured - especially in the area of reproductive health - in a matter of a few years better measures should be available. UNFPA was working with others in the international community to improve data in terms of both methodology and collection. UNFPA was of the view, too, that national commitment to population and development policies and programmes was a fundamental criterion for assigning resources to countries. Through programme review and strategy development (PRSD) missions, situation analyses and information gathered by other international organizations, qualitative information was available even at that time. Domestic financial contributions, even modest ones in the poorest countries, should, in the opinion of UNFPA, be used in assessing the distribution of resources to individual countries.

171. In summing up, the Executive Director indicated that it was important for the Executive Board to reach a decision on the new approach to resource allocations at the second regular session 1996. More than 30 country programmes would be coming up for renewal during the coming year. Without a new process, resources would end up being allocated according to pre-ICPD thinking for years to come. With the active cooperation of delegations in informal consultations in the immediate future, the Executive Director felt it would still be possible to revise the report in time for the second regular session. In her estimation, the unresolved elements for reaching a consensus on the new approach were few and could readily be discussed in the coming days for incorporation into a revised report.

172. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/10. Strategy for allocation of UNFPA country resources

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report on a new approach for the allocation of United Nations Population Fund resources to country programmes (document DP/FPA/1996/1);

2. Decides to continue its consideration of this agenda item at its second regular session 1996;

3. Requests the Executive Director to submit to the Board at its second regular session 1996 a revised document reflecting the comments made by members of the Board on the new approach for the allocation of United Nations Population Fund resources during the first regular session 1996 of the Board.

19 January 1996

XI. FUTURE ROLE OF UNFPA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

173. The Executive Board decided to postpone consideration of the item to the second regular session 1996.

XII. GLOBAL CONTRACEPTIVE COMMODITY PROGRAMME

174. The Deputy Executive Director for Programme introduced the report on the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme (document DP/FPA/1996/3). He noted that in its decision 95/36, the Executive Board had agreed in principle to the establishment of the global contraceptive commodity programme to be managed by UNFPA and had requested a comprehensive report on the envisaged programme, including the objectives and scope, administrative and financial aspects, and UNFPA efforts to promote national capacity, drawing on the experience of other United Nations agencies, in particular, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization, and the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office, in order to take a final decision on the matter. He stated that two issues in the report needed further clarification: (a) the initial capitalization of $5 million to establish the programme was deemed the minimum amount necessary to facilitate the procurement of a range of commonly requested contraceptive products and that experience to date indicated that the emphasis would be given to condoms and intra-uterine devices (IUDs) since those were the products most in demand and ones requiring lengthy lead-times; and (b) the fee proposed for the programme would be the same 5 per cent that was currently charged for UNFPA regular procurement services - there would be no extra charge for urgent requests. He also stated that UNFPA had no intention of establishing a warehousing facility for contraceptives. Informal discussions had shown that manufacturers would be willing to hold stocks of contraceptives for UNFPA until they were needed for shipment.

175. He said that the proposed programme was part of the UNFPA overall objective of building national capacity and that the programme would be coordinated with other UNFPA activities such as needs assessments and technical cooperation for logistics management systems. He added that local

production and local procurement of contraceptives were areas of national capacity-building that UNFPA had supported in the past and would continue to work on in the future. He said that the global contraceptive commodity programme was viewed by many donors and UNFPA as a means of meeting country requests for contraceptives, including condoms for HIV/AIDS prevention, in a more effective and efficient manner, and that it was fully consistent with the broad reproductive health approach, including family planning and sexual health, that the Board had endorsed in decision 95/15.

176. Numerous delegations commended the report and expressed their strong support for the establishment of the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme. A number of delegations from developing countries underscored the need for the programme owing to the difficulties many countries experience with contraceptive stock shortfalls. Those shortfalls were attributable to a number of factors, such as a shortfall in funds, problems with procurement and warehousing, or an inaccurate assessment of need. Several delegations emphasized that shortfalls in contraceptive supplies created serious problems and could undermine efforts to provide high-quality reproductive health services. Many delegations stated that UNFPA had a comparative advantage in dealing with urgent contraceptive commodity requests thanks to its experience with country reproductive health programmes. One delegation emphasized that UNFPA had built trust in its ability to procure contraceptives, as shown by the fact that many donors were using UNFPA procurement services.

177. Several delegations expressed concerns about the report and thought that it did not adequately address the request of the Board for a thorough investigation of the experience of other United Nations agencies in providing emergency procurement services. One delegation was critical of the representation of IAPSO procurement capabilities in the report. Several delegations stated that UNFPA should focus on implementation of the reproductive health approach and that expanding its contraceptive procurement services would create an image problem for UNFPA. Several delegations expressed concern that the proposed global contraceptive commodity programme might not provide a solution to the problems of contraceptive shortages, and that more attention should be paid to national capacity-building in the area of logistics management systems. One delegation explained that donors would be disinclined to provide funds to countries with logistics management problems and that UNFPA should focus its efforts in that area. Several delegations said they would be willing to support the proposed programme if they could be assured that it would be established on a temporary basis as a short-term solution to the problems of contraceptive shortages arising in developing countries. They hoped that UNFPA could offer long-term solutions to contraceptive supply problems through national capacity-building in developing countries.

178. In response to the suggestion made by many delegations that UNFPA needed to place greater emphasis on national capacity-building in the area of contraceptive supply, UNFPA informed the Executive Board that technical advisory services were being provided in a number of areas, including local production of contraceptives (where appropriate), local procurement capacity, and infrastructure and skills for logistics management. UNFPA also assured delegations that the proposed global contraceptive commodity programme would be set up as a temporary programme and that it offered an immediate response to countries' requests for assistance with urgent contraceptive supply problems.

179. The Executive Director stated that the UNFPA mandate in the area reproductive health included the procurement of contraceptive commodities. UNFPA was committed to meeting better the needs of individuals for reproductive health information and services. One of those needs continued to be for safe and effective modern methods of family planning, including condoms for HIV/AIDS prevention. Access to contraception also contributed to safe motherhood, reduced the transmission of STDs and empowered women in society.

180. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/03. Global contraceptive commodity programme

The Executive Board

1. Takes notes of the report, as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/3, and of the comments made during the Executive Board session;

2. Endorses the establishment of a global contraceptive commodity programme, to be managed by the United Nations Population Fund, and funded with an initial capitalization of $5 million, as set out in paragraph 23 of document DP/FPA/1996/3, as an integral component of the overall work of the Fund in strengthening reproductive health programmes, including family planning and sexual health, and emphasizes that these activities should be monitored carefully to ensure that they adhere to technical standards of safety and quality;

3. Requests the Executive Director to submit an annual progress report on the activities and the management of the global contraceptive commodity programme to the Executive Board, paying particular attention to the progress in strengthening national capacities to deal with the logistical aspects of contraceptive procurement;

4. Requests the Executive Director to engage in further appropriate collaboration and coordination with other relevant United Nations entities, in particular, the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office and the World Health Organization, active in the fields of procurement and reproductive health;

5. Requests the Executive Director to arrange an overall independent and external evaluation of the global contraceptive commodity programme at a time to be decided by the Executive Board, particularly with regard to its impact on national capacity-building in order to provide the Board with the information required to make a decision on whether the programme should be continued or ended.

19 January 1996

XIII. MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

181. The Executive Board decided to postpone consideration of the item to the second regular session 1996.

XIV. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Interim assistance for South Africa (DP/FPA/1996/10)

182. The Director, Africa Division, introduced the UNFPA request for interim assistance for South Africa (DP/FPA/1996/10) and additional funding authority for Mali (DP/FPA/1996/7), Uganda (DP/FPA/1996/8), and Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/1996/9). Following the introductory remarks, the Executive Board decided to discuss the submissions for the four countries as a group in order to save time.

183. In regard to South Africa, approval was requested for interim assistance to South Africa in the amount of $4.2 million over a three-year period beginning in 1994 to enable UNFPA to continue working with the Government in developing the population components of South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme. One delegation, speaking on behalf of the African Group, commended UNFPA and the Director of the Africa Division for its efforts in South Africa and requested the Executive Board to approve the requests for additional resources. One delegation underlined the importance of HIV/AIDS prevention education for youth under 20 years, particularly with regard to South Africa and Uganda. Another delegation observed that South Africa had not yet completed the development of a population policy for reasons that were deemed to be obvious. He called attention to the perceived need to provide support for advocacy and social mobilization in the country. One delegation raised the issue of the effect that the ongoing UNFPA programme would have on South Africa's current programme of decentralization. Another commented on the implications of social adjustment porgrammes in the region and voiced support for South Africa.

184. In her reply, the Director of the Africa Division remarked that South Africa's problems were of special concern to the Fund. The Government was still in the process of seeking to consolidate its efforts in the population sector. Population policies needed to be de-mystified, and youth had to have access to reproductive health services. However, there were no simple answers. She said that the programme under consideration was a transitional one for which technical cooperation would be provided while a more comprehensive programme of assistance was being prepared. She commented that the experiences of Uganda and Ethiopia, countries that had undertaken their own decentralization processes, could be helpful to South Africa. She observed that Africa as a whole still had enormous problems to overcome and needed training to build a critical mass of trained staff as well as advocacy efforts to draw attention to population issues and to encourage hesitant Governments to confront population issues. The representative of South Africa thanked UNFPA for its valuable assistance and commented that the 1996 census supported by UNFPA would benefit future policy development. He urged UNFPA to reinforce and expand the work already under way.

185. The Executive Board approved the interim assistance to South Africa in the amount of $4.2 million as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/10.

Request for additional resources for Mali (DP/FPA/1996/7)

186. In the consideration by the Executive Board of the request for the extension of, and additional resources for, the Mali country programme

(DP/FPA/1996/7), one delegation raised the concern that not enough resources were being devoted to women. The representative of Mali expressed appreciation for the support UNFPA was providing and asked how UNFPA assistance was being coordinated with the UNDP country programme.

187. In her response, the Director of the Africa Division said that a particular problem in Mali had been the lack of a counterpart women's organization with which to work. Such an organization now existed, however, and she hoped that that would mean a greater allocation of resources in the area of gender, population and development in the next country programme. She said that UNFPA was working closely with UNDP in its programme of improving the country's health situation and thought that it could serve as a model for other countries as well.

188. The Executive Board approved the increase of the funding authority for the Mali country programme by $2.55 million and the extension of the current programme by one year, to the end of 1996, as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/7.

Request for additional resources for Uganda (DP/FPA/1996/8)

189. There was general support among members of the Executive Board for the proposal to provide additional resources for the UNFPA country programme in Uganda (DP/FPA/1996/8). One delegation emphasized the importance of providing information and education on HIV/AIDS prevention for the country's youth. Another delegation noted the improved coordination of population activities and collaboration with donors that was being carried out by the UNFPA Country Director. It was recognized that progress had been made in the reproductive health and gender programmes; it was stressed, however, that delivery of reproductive health services continued to be weak. The same delegation expressed two major concerns: first, it questioned whether current IEC efforts were effective and thus should receive added funding; and, second, whether it was justifiable and appropriate for UNFPA to support district population planning activities.

190. The representative of Uganda expressed appreciation for the assistance provided by UNFPA and the donors. The representative agreed that the various concerns expressed by the delegations should be seriously considered. HIV/AIDS was a major problem that should receive more emphasis, especially with regard to prevention among young people. The Government of Uganda placed much importance on IEC efforts and had requested additional support in that area. As a result of recent economic reforms, most governmental planning processes were being decentralized to the district level. Not many donors were active in the decentralization process. The Government appreciated UNFPA support in promoting coordinated and integrated population and development planning at the district level as a way of implementing the national population policy at the grass-roots level.

191. The Director of the Africa Division expressed appreciation for the support by the delegations for increased funding for the country programme. Those funds would enable the programme to expand reproductive health services to all 24 of the country's districts. She noted that the IEC programme supported by UNFPA focused on reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, and often contained provision for reproductive health services. She stated that

the current IEC programme had been strong and effective in its outreach to the general public and specific audiences. For example, one component of the programme included reproductive health IEC campaigns for 120 industries. The main problem was that delivery of quality reproductive health services continued to lag behind the demand for such services that were being generated by IEC activities. A new programme for youth and reproductive health had been initiated and was being closely monitored to ascertain if it might provide a model approach for other countries.

192. The Executive Board approved the request for additional funding of $6.2 million for the Country Programme for Uganda as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/8.

Request for additional resources for Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/1996/9)

193. In her introductory remarks, the Director of the Africa Division reported that some concerns had been raised about the proposed additional resources for the country programme for Burkina Faso (document DP/FPA/1996/9). Therefore, she said that the request was being reconsidered and would be presented to the Board for its consideration at a future session, but she invited comments from any interested delegations. Several delegations emphasized the need for continuing assistance to Burkina Faso but saw no problem with reconsidering the proposal in the future.

194. The Executive Board agreed to postpone consideration of the request for additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/1996/9) to the second regular session 1996.

XV. SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

195. The Deputy Executive Director for Programme introduced document DP/FPA/1996/11 on South-South cooperation: UNFPA support to Partners in Population and Development. He noted that the Partners in Population and Development had been formed by 10 developing countries as a way of implementing the recommendations of the Programme of Action of the ICPD concerning South-South cooperation. They had held their initial organizational meeting at Harare, Zimbabwe, in April 1995, at which time they had requested that UNFPA provide them with administrative and personnel management support, in addition to programme support. In that context, UNFPA had agreed to establish a trust fund for the Partners, which currently had contributions of approximately $1 million from the Rockefeller Foundation and $150,000 each from the World Bank and UNFPA. UNFPA was also requested to recruit and assign project personnel to the Partners' Secretariat, and the Fund was now asking the Executive Board to approve that request. The Deputy Executive Director emphasized that the request did not entail creating a permanent post for UNFPA.

196. Numerous delegations noted the importance of South-South cooperation as way of increasing the national capacity of developing countries to carry out population programmes on their own and endorsed the particular support that UNFPA was being requested to provide in that instance. Several delegations, however, questioned whether providing that kind of administrative, as opposed

to programmatic, support was the best way for UNFPA to help the Partners. They also wondered whether the trust fund that had been set up was going to be used for administrative costs or would be used to finance programme activities, which were seen as being more important. Others questioned whether the proposed staffing arrangement was a temporary or permanent measure and whether relying on UNFPA was not negating the very aim of South-South cooperation itself, i.e., having developing countries manage and carry out their own programmes. Some questioned whether that did not make the initiative a UNFPA- and donor-driven activity rather than an indigenous and country-driven programme, which was what it should be. Several delegations wanted to know if the Partners' arrangement was a closed grouping and whether other countries could join in what was perceived to be a very worthwhile initiative.

197. The Deputy Executive Director reiterated that even though UNFPA had been asked to provide and channel administrative and programme support, the Partners were an autonomous organization. He also noted that several potential donors had requested UNFPA involvement because its established personnel and financial management operations would allow the Partners to start working quickly and would inspire a level of confidence that could help to generate more funding. He also said that it was everyone's intention that the current arrangements would be temporary, and further assistance of that type would have to be approved by the Executive Board. To allay what seemed to be the concern of several delegations, he pointed out that it was far from being UNFPA only activity in the area of South-South cooperation, and that the programmatic framework for such activities had been approved by the Board as part of the Fund's intercountry programme. UNFPA certainly planned to work with the Partners in many aspects of their programme and not just by providing administrative support. He noted that the Partners constituted an autonomous body, and therefore they were solely responsible for determining membership in the group. However, the Partners had always made it clear that they were not an exclusive body and would open up their membership to others, as requested and as appropriate.

198. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/09. South-South cooperation: UNFPA support to "Partners in Population and Development"

The Executive Board

1. Approves the arrangements proposed to support the intergovernmental organization "Partners in Population and Development", as outlined in the report on South-South cooperation: UNFPA support to "Partners in Population and Development" (document DP/FPA/1996/11);

2. Invites the Partners to consider broadening the scope by actively involving other developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition in the programmes of "Partners in Population and Development";

3. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to report to the Executive Board at the third regular session 1998 on the activities and achievements of this initiative, including the role of the UNFPA, and on the justification for further Fund involvement beyond 1998.

19 January 1996

XVI. OTHER MATTERS

Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification

199. In addressing the Executive Board on developments regarding the Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Administrator recalled that the issue had initially been discussed at the first regular session 1995, when he had reported that UNDP was well placed to serve as the host of the Global Mechanism and had offered the services of the organization to host it. At that time, delegations had stated that, while UNDP might be an appropriate body to house the Global Mechanism, they would await the decision of the first Conference of Parties to the Convention, as envisaged under the Convention.

200. In updating the Executive Board on further developments, the Administrator noted that the discussions during the seventh meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (INC-D) in Nairobi, held from 7 to 18 August 1995, had been preliminary. The issue of the functions of the Global Mechanism was, however, still open to differing interpretations. Thus, the Interim Secretariat of the INC-D had been requested to prepare an analytical and synoptic report to facilitate the discussion at the eighth INC-D meeting, where the first substantive discussions on the full terms of reference of the Global Mechanism and the identification of an organization to host it would take place. The Administrator informed the Board that he would address that meeting and contribute to the discussion on the terms of reference and modus operandi of the Global Mechanism.

201. One delegation noted that while the functions of the Global Mechanism were not yet clear, and were to be decided upon at the eighth INC-D meeting, his Government would have preferred the Administrator to have consulted further with the Executive Board before informing the parties to the Convention about the capacity and willingness of UNDP to host the Global Mechanism. He also noted that although the Board would not govern the Global Mechanism, which would report to the Conference of Parties of the Convention, it was important to ascertain the cost implications for UNDP for hosting the Global Mechanism, which would be a long-term commitment.

202. The Administrator responded that it was his view that he had provided information to the Executive Board at its first regular session 1995 indicating the intention of UNDP to propose its capacity and willingness to host the Global Mechanism. The Director of the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO) explained that every effort had been made to keep the Board informed on the progress of discussions and decisions on the Global Mechanism, despite the fact that the process has been a rather gradual and iterative one, as the responsibilities of the Global Mechanism were not yet well defined. He noted that according to the Convention, the more detailed discussions on administrative and financing arrangements were to take place only after the hosting organization had been identified, and observed that UNDP would be reporting to the Board in order to benefit from its guidance and decisions on the issue.

203. Another delegation underlined its view that the decision of the Conference of Parties on the host organization would influence the Executive Board in its opinion on the matter. He also requested, and received, information on the other organizations who had earlier been invited to consider hosting the Global Mechanism.

Tribute to Mr. Jean-Jacques Graisse

204. The Administrator thanked delegations for a productive session, and expressed special appreciation to Mr. Jean-Jacques Graisse, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs, and Secretary of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, for his able leadership of the Board. Mr. Graisse, who was joining the World Food Programme as Assistant Executive Director (Operations), would be deeply missed.

205. On behalf of the Executive Board, the President made a statement in tribute to Mr. Graisse. She underlined the valuable contribution of Mr. Graisse to the work of the Board, and his congenial personality which had led to the creation of a positive atmosphere in the Board.

Assistance to Myanmar

206. One delegation wished to bring to the attention of the Executive Board a letter dated 14 January 1996 addressed to the Administrator from Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, General-Secretary of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar. His delegation asked that the management of UNDP review the letter and then hold an informal briefing for interested Board members in order to present comments on the contents of the letter. He underlined that his delegation did not intend to reopen the debate and decision on the item of assistance to Myanmar, which the Board had already concluded.

207. On a point of order, another delegation noted that other Executive Board members had not received the letter and thus could not participate effectively in any further discussion on the subject.

208. The President informed the Executive Board that further discussion would not be held on the matter since members did not have a copy of the letter.

209. The Executive Board concluded its work by adopting the following decision:

96/12. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the first regular session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Elected the following Bureau for 1996:

President	H.E. Ms. Annette DES ILES (Trinidad and Tobago)
Vice-President	Mr. Rolando BAHAMONDES (Canada)
Vice-President	Mr. Bruce L. NAMAKANDO (Zambia)
Vice-President	Ms. Cecilia B. REBONG (Philippines)
Vice-President	Mr. Milan DUBCEK (Slovakia)

Approved the agenda and work plan for its first regular session 1996 (DP/1996/L.1);

Approved the report of the third regular session 1995 (DP/1995/54);

Agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in New York subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Second regular session 1996:	25-29 March 1996
Annual session 1996:	6-17 May 1996 (Geneva)
Third regular session 1996:	9-13 September 1996

(Note: 16 May is an official United Nations holiday in Geneva)

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at these sessions as listed in the annex;

Adopted decision 96/06 of 19 January 1996 on documentation.

ITEM 2: INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

Took note of the report of the Administrator on the follow-up to paragraph 4 of Executive Board decision 95/22 with the comments made thereon (DP/1996/2);

ITEM 3: MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

Adopted decision 96/07 of 19 January 1996 on the implementation of successor programming arrangements;

Adopted decision 96/11 of 19 January 1996 on UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina;

ITEM 4: UNDP: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/01 of 16 January 1996 on assistance to Myanmar;

Took note of the extension for the fifth country programe for Fiji (DP/CP/FIJ/5/EXTENSION 1);

Took note of the extension for the fifth country programe for Tonga (DP/CP/TON/5/EXTENSION 1);

Approved the first country cooperation framework for Bangladesh (DP/CCF/BGD/1);

Took note of the programme objectives for Aruba covering the period 1994-1996 (DP/1996/5);

Took note of the programme objectives for Trinidad and Tobago covering the period 1994-1996 (DP/1996/6);

ITEM 5: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTER-AGENCY PROCUREMENT SERVICES OFFICE

Adopted decision 96/02 of 17 January 1996 on Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office;

ITEM 6: UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

Adopted decision 96/04 of 19 January 1996 on United Nations technical cooperation activities;

ITEM 7: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Adopted decision 96/08 of 19 January 1996 on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

ITEM 8: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 9: UNDP/UNFPA: FOLLOW-UP TO AND PREPARATION FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Adopted decision 96/05 of 19 January on follow-up to and preparations for the Economic and Social Council;

ITEM 10: UNDP/UNFPA: JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 11: UNFPA: STRATEGY FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Adopted decision 96/10 of 19 January 1996 on the strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources;

ITEM 12: UNFPA: FUTURE ROLE OF UNPFA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 13: UNFPA: GLOBAL CONTRACEPTIVE COMMODITY PROGRAMME

Adopted decision 96/03 of 19 January 1996 on the Global contraceptive commodity programme;

ITEM 14: UNFPA: MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 15: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved the interim assistance for South Africa (DP/FPA/1996/10);

Approved the additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Mali (DP/FPA/1996/7);

Approved the additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Uganda (DP/FPA/1996/8);

Agreed to postpone consideration of the request for the additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/1996/9) to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 16: UNFPA: SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Adopted decision 96/09 of 19 January 1996 on UNFPA support to "Partners in Population and Development";

ITEM 17: OTHER MATTERS

Took note of the presentation by the Administrator of UNDP on the Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification (DP/1996/CRP.1) and the comments made thereon;

19 January 1996

Annex

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FUTURE SESSIONS

The following subjects are scheduled for consideration at future sessions:

Second regular session (25-29 March 1996)

Item 1. Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

Item 2. UNFPA: Strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources (96/4)

Item 3. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 4. UNFPA: Effectiveness of the UNFPA publications programme (95/35)

Item 5. UNFPA: Role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs (95/21)

Item 6. UNFPA: Membership in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy (95/15)

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 7. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budget and accounts (oral report)

Item 8. UNFPA/UNDP: Joint and Co-Sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNDP segment

Item 9. UNDP: Agency support costs (DP/1995/49)

Item 10. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters (mid-term reviews)

Item 11. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters: Follow-up to Executive Board decision 95/28 (§ 14, § 36, § 37)

Item 12. UNDP: Evaluation (92/2, § 3)

Item 13. UNDP: Assistance to the Palestinian people (92/2, § 3)

Item 14. Other matters (including report on field visit)

Annual session (6-17 May 1996-Geneva)

- Organizational matters

- Rules of procedure

UNFPA segment

- Report of the Executive Director and programme-level activities

- Mission statement of UNFPA

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Reports to the Economic and Social Council

- Harmonization of presentation of budget and accounts

UNDP segment

- Annual report of the Administrator and related matters (including Initiatives for change)

- Matters relating to the programming cycles:

  -- Implementation of the new programming arrangements: interim report

- United Nations Volunteers (92/2, § 5)

- United Nations Development Fund for Women

- United Nations Office for Project Services

Third regular session (9-13 September 1996)

- Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- Country programmes and related matters

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts
- Reports on field visits

UNDP segment

- Matters relating to programming cycles: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/23 and 95/26
- Country programmes and related matters
- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- United Nations Development Fund for Women
  -- Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/18 and 95/32
- Report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

1997 sessions

First regular session 1997	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997	5-16 May 1997
Third regular session 1997	15-19 September 1997